

AHEPA's initial interests were to cultivate Greek-owned businesses and help its members assimilate into American culture. Today, AHEPA's mission is to carry the legacy of Greek culture throughout generations. The organization continues to do this through diversification, language immersion and educational enrichment. AHEPA is known for its philanthropic resources which fund equal opportunity housing, hospitals, specialty schools and academic scholarships.

While AHEPA primarily is a membership organization for Greek Americans or Americans of Greek descent, membership is open to all Americans who support the organization's mission. This is the finest tradition of Philhellenism, and reminds us that the modern relationship between the people of America and of Greece was forged by their parallel struggles for freedom from foreign tyranny, and by the inspiration we both take from the democracy first developed centuries ago in Greece.

For 85 years the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association has remained an organization that embodies the true meaning of America. I commend AHEPA, and ask that my colleagues support this commendation. I urge all my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 71.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, AHEPA, is the largest and oldest American-based, Greek-heritage, grass-roots membership organization. It was created on July 26, 1922, in response to the alarming number of local and national groups whose missions were based on racism.

The founders of AHEPA were Greek immigrants who strove to find ways to adapt to their new country and honor their heritage and cultural ideals. Their mission is to promote Hellenism, education, philanthropy, civic responsibility and family and individual excellence. These efforts are made through community service and volunteerism. It is an organization with over 1.3 million participants, making it the largest association for American citizens of Greek ancestry.

AHEPA's commitment to education is one of its strongest components. Over \$4 million is endowed at the local, district and national levels toward the use of scholarships, and a half million dollars is awarded annually to thousands of students. By providing these scholarships, it affords students the opportunities to educate and be educated on the rich, cultural history of relations between Greece and the United States.

Other AHEPA achievements include securing funding for the "Tribute to Olympism" sculpture in Atlanta, Georgia, the creation of the George C. Marshall statue at the United States Embassy located in Athens, Greece, and

the Federal grant of \$500 million providing affordable housing to senior citizens. A few of AHEPA's philanthropic successes include the restoration of the Statue of Liberty at Ellis Island, and they continue to send care packages to our troops through the USO.

In their 85th year, the American Hellenic Education Progressive Association continues to promote its ideals of ancient Greece through community service and volunteerism. The association has grown tremendously over the years, and it is to be congratulated for its charitable contributions to society both in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to my distinguished colleague from the State of Florida, Mr. BILIRAKIS.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great Greek American pride that I rise today to offer my congratulations on the occasion of the 85th anniversary of the American Hellenic Education Progressive Association. Founded in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 26, 1922, as a reaction to racism and bigotry, AHEPA is the oldest and largest American Hellenic organization in the United States today. Its mission, to promote Hellenism, education, philanthropy, civic responsibility, family and individual excellence, set the standard for ethnic organizations, and has helped Greek Americans become one of the most successful ethnic groups in the United States.

AHEPA's list of accomplishments is amazing. It has endowed millions of dollars in academic scholarships, and the AHEPA family has contributed over \$1 billion in national projects for such deserving entities as Saint Basil's Academy, Cooley's Anemia Foundation, the Special Olympics, and Muscular Dystrophy research.

Additionally, the AHEPA National Housing Corporation has secured over \$4 million to develop and complete over 70 housing projects for low-income seniors.

AHEPA's patriotic endeavors have included helping thousands of Greek immigrants assimilate into American life, and four of those immigrants were my grandparents, Mr. Speaker, raising \$253 million for the U.S. bond drive during World War II, helping to restore the Statue of Liberty, providing tens of thousands of dollars to the 9/11 relief effort, and sending countless care packages to our troops overseas.

Its good works are endless, Mr. Speaker. That is why I am so proud to tell you that I am a member of AHEPA. And I will tell you that I am a member on the local level of the Tarpon Springs Chapter in Florida, the George Washington Chapter, Number 16, which was founded in the 1920s.

As cochair of the Caucus on Hellenic Affairs, I will continue to work closely with my cochair, CAROLYN MALONEY, my fellow Greek American Congressmen and women, Philhellenes in Congress, as well as AHEPA president, Gus James, to encourage the wonderful educational and philanthropic endeavors that have characterized AHEPA for 85 years.

Also, I promise to work in conjunction with AHEPA to continue to strengthen U.S./Greece relations, secure religious freedom and protection for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and that is our number one issue, Mr. Speaker, and promote solutions to the Cypress and the FYROM issues.

I wish Mr. Gus James and the whole AHEPA family continued success and a long life as it continues to serve as a beacon of hope, true and good things. That is what Hellenic Americans want. Bravo AHEPA, and at least 85 more.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today we rise to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the founding of an organization truly worthy of the praise of this body and of our Nation.

The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, AHEPA, was founded to embrace ideals which are prized by the United States and Greece both individually and jointly. The Greek American community seeks to embody the principles of AHEPA's mission, most notably: freedom from bigotry and discrimination, philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence through community service.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that the Greek-American community is represented by an organization of the caliber and effectiveness of AHEPA.

AHEPA has done much over the years to strengthen and support our Nation domestically and to further our interests internationally—from providing dignified affordable senior housing at home, to encouraging a more stable Eastern Mediterranean and a stronger EU.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in strong support of this resolution commemorating the 85th anniversary of the founding of AHEPA and recognizing the significant contributions of Greek-Americans to the United States.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are able to bring before the House today H. Con. Res. 71, commemorating the 85th anniversary of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, AHEPA.

I am a proud original cosponsor of this resolution that honors an organization that spreads the universal truths of Hellenism—humanity, freedom, and democracy—across the United States and around the world.

AHEPA was founded to stand against the forces of bigotry and hate and to help Greek immigrants to become part of our Nation. The organization also helps young people achieve their dreams of education and supporting philanthropy and public service that helps the neediest in our society.

As a Member of Congress, I am proud to participate in the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Affairs. In this capacity, I work with fellow Members to enhance and strengthen the United States' relationship with Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. The friendship